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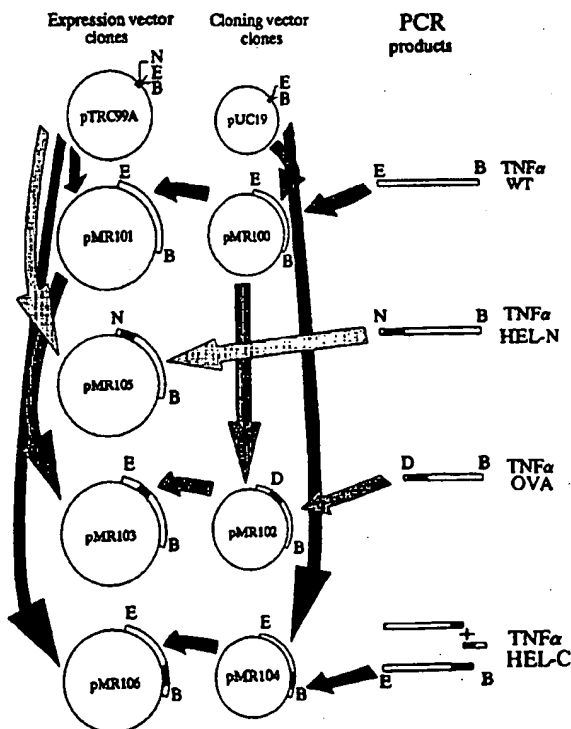
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<b>(21) International Application Number:</b> PCT/DK94/00318 <b>(22) International Filing Date:</b> 25 August 1994 (25.08.94) <b>(30) Priority Data:</b> 0964/93                      26 August 1993 (26.08.93)                      DK <b>(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US):</b> MOURITSEN & ELSNER A/S [DK/DK]; Lersø Parkallé 40, DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø (DK). <b>(72) Inventors; and</b> <b>(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only):</b> MOURITSEN, Søren [DK/DK]; Lindevangsvej 24, DK-3460 Birkerød (DK). ELSNER, Henrik [DK/DK]; Svend Gønges Vej 36, DK-2700 Brønshøj (DK). <b>(74) Agent:</b> HOFMAN-BANG & BOUTARD A/S; Adelgade 15, DK-1304 Copenhagen K (DK).		<b>(81) Designated States:</b> AM, AT, AU, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, HU, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LK, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MN, MW, NL, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SI, SK, TJ, TT, UA, US, UZ, VN, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG), ARIPO patent (KE, MW, SD).  <b>Published</b> <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>

**(54) Title:** INDUCING ANTIBODY RESPONSE AGAINST SELF-PROTEINS WITH THE AID OF FOREIGN T-CELL EPITOPES

**(57) Abstract**

A novel method for utilizing the immune apparatus to remove and/or down-regulate self-proteins consists in inserting one or more foreign T-cell epitopes in such proteins by molecular biological means, thereby rendering said proteins immunogenic. The modulated self-proteins can be used as autovaccines against undesirable proteins in humans or animals, said autovaccine being useful as vaccines against a number of diseases, e.g. cancer, chronic inflammatory diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel diseases, allergic symptoms or diabetes mellitus.

**Cloning strategy for murine TNF $\alpha$  mutants.**



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# INDUCING ANTIBODY RESPONSE AGAINST SELF-PROTEINS WITH THE AID OF FOREIGN T-CELL EPITOPES

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## 5 Background of the invention

This invention concerns a novel method for utilizing the immune apparatus to remove and/or down-regulate self-proteins, the presence of which somehow is unwanted in the individual. These could be proteins which are causing disease and/or other undesirable symptoms or signs of disease. Such proteins are removed by circulating auto-antibodies which specifically are induced by vaccination. This invention describes a method for developing such  
15 autovaccines.

## Introduction

Physiologically, the vertebrate immune system serves as a defence mechanism against invasion of the body by infectious objects such as microorganisms. Foreign proteins are effectively removed via the reticuloendothelial system by highly specific circulating antibodies, and viruses and bacteria are attacked by a complex battery of cellular and humoral mechanisms including antibodies, cytotoxic T lymphocytes, Natural Killer cells, complement etc. The leader of this battle is the T helper ( $T_H$ ) lymphocyte which, in collaboration with the Antigen Presenting Cells (APC), regulate the immune defence via a complex network  
20 of cytokines.

Normally the individual's own proteins (the so-called self- or autoproteins) are not attacked by the immune apparatus. The described events thus generally are beneficial to the individual, but in rare cases the process goes wrong, and the immune system turns towards  
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the individual's own components, eventually leading to an autoimmune disease.

5 The presence of some self-proteins is, however, inexpedient in situations where they, in elevated levels, induce disease symptoms. High levels of immunoglobulins of the IgE class are e.g. known to be important for the induction of type I allergy, and tumor necrosis factor  $\alpha$  (TNF $\alpha$ ) is known to be able to cause cachexia in cancer  
10 patients and patients suffering from other chronic diseases (H.N. Langstein et al., Cancer Res. 51, 2302-2306, 1991). TNF $\alpha$  also plays important roles in the inflammatory process (W.P. Arend et al., Arthritis Rheum. 33, 305-315, 1990). Hormones in sex-hormone dependent  
15 cancer are other examples of proteins which are unwanted in certain situations. This invention concerns a method for the development of autovaccines against such proteins.

Others have developed autovaccines by conjugating self-  
20 proteins or appropriate synthetic peptides derived from these to large, foreign carrier proteins. Talwar et al. (G.P. Talwar et al, Int. J. Immunopharmacol. 14, 511-514, 1992) have been able to prevent reproduction in women using a vaccine consisting of a conjugate of human  
25 chorionic gonadotropin and tetanus toxoid. There are also other examples of such autoimmunogenic conjugates which have been used therapeutically in man and in animal models (D.R. Stanworth et al., Lancet 336, 1279-1281 (1990)). In the present invention the production of such  
30 conjugates between the self-proteins and foreign proteins is not necessary in order to obtain strong autoantibody responses. This has several advantages.

The technical field

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T<sub>H</sub> lymphocytes recognize protein antigens presented on the

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surface of the APC. They do not recognize, however, native antigen per se. Instead, they appear to recognize a complex ligand consisting of two components, a "processed" (fragmented) protein antigen (the so-called T cell epitope) and a Major Histocompatibility Complex class II molecule (O. Werdelin et al., Imm. Rev. 106, 181 (1988)). This recognition eventually enables the  $T_H$  lymphocyte specifically to help B lymphocytes to produce specific antibodies towards the intact protein antigen (Werdelin et al., supra). A given T cell only recognizes a certain antigen-MHC combination and will not recognize the same or another antigen presented by a gene product of another MHC allele. This phenomenon is called MHC restriction.

Self-proteins are also presented by the APC, but normally such fragments are ignored or not recognized by the T helper lymphocytes. This is the reason why individuals generally do not harbour autoantibodies in their serum.

It is, however, possible artificially to induce antibodies against self-proteins. This can be done, as previously mentioned, by covalent conjugation of the self-protein to an appropriate carrier protein as e.g. tetanus toxoid or key-hole limpet hemocyanin. During the processing of such conjugates in the APC, the necessary  $T_H$  lymphocyte stimulatory epitopes are provided from the foreign protein eventually leading to the induction of antibodies against the self-protein as well as against the carrier protein. One disadvantage of using this principle is, however, that the antibody response towards the self-protein will be restricted due to shielding of epitopes by the covalently linked carrier protein. Another disadvantage is the increased risk of inducing allergic side-effects due to the contemporary induction of a very strong antibody response against the foreign carrier protein. This strong antibody response might also be the reason why this method

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is not as efficient as observed in the method according to the invention.

Other researchers have coupled a single peptide T cell epitope chemically to a self-protein and managed to induce an autoantibody response with MHC restriction to that particular T cell epitope (S. Sad et al., Immunology 76, 599-603, 1992). This method seems to be more effective compared to coupling of large carrier proteins. However, it will only induce antibodies in a population expressing the appropriate MHC molecules. This means that a rather large number of T cell epitopes has to be coupled to the self-protein which will eventually disturb the B cell epitopes on the surface of the self-protein. Extensive conjugation of proteins may furthermore have the opposite effect with regard to immunogenicity (international patent application No. WO 87/00056) and the surface exposed peptide T cell epitopes may be destroyed by proteolytic enzymes during antigen processing (S. Mouritsen, Scand. J. Immunol. 30, 723, 1989), making that method less efficient than the method of the invention. By this method autoantibodies can be induced within a few weeks (Example 2). Finally, the exact structure of such multi-conjugated self-proteins will not be chemically and pharmaceutically well-defined.

The induction of autoantibodies against TNF $\alpha$  by the method of the present invention has been directly compared to the autoantibody response induced when using a conjugate of TNF $\alpha$  and E. coli proteins, which must contain small single T cell epitope peptides as well as larger foreign carrier proteins. The autoantibody response induced by the method of the invention was induced several weeks earlier and was furthermore of a higher titer (Example 4).

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5 Recently an improved method has been proposed for breaking the B cell autotolerance by chemical conjugation of B and optionally also peptide T cell epitopes to a high molecular weight dextran molecule (international patent application No. WO 93/23076). The disadvantages mentioned above, however, also hold true for said method, which anyway is clearly different from the method of the present invention.

10 Although it has been proposed previously that a well known strong T cell epitope could be inserted into a foreign protein using recombinant DNA technology (EP-A2-0 343 460) or synthetically into a peptide (WO 90/15627) in order to increase an antibody response towards that protein or peptide, it has not been proposed that this could be done with the purpose of breaking the autotolerance of the immune system. Using these methods for induction of auto-antibodies one a priori would expect the same rules to be true with regard to the above-mentioned limitations of the MHC restriction of the response. Surprisingly, however, by using the method of the invention, it is possible to induce and equally fast and even a stronger autoantibody response against TNF $\alpha$  despite the fact that the inserted T cell epitope used was not restricted to the MHC molecules of the immunized mice (Example 3). The reason for this observation is not clear but may be due to the appearance of new MHC binding segments in the mutagenized area in the self-protein. However, the experiment shown in example 6 demonstrates that this is probably not the case, since synthetic peptides representing overlapping regions of the implanted ovalbumin T cell epitope in ubiquitin did not bind strongly to any of the MHC class II molecules of the H-2<sup>k</sup> mice in which this recombinant molecule was highly immunogenic (Example 5).

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Most of the potential MHC class II binding segments of a protein are normally cryptic and will not be presented to the host T cells by the antigen presenting cells (S. Mouritsen et al, Scand. J. Immunol. 34, 421, 1991). The  
5 observed lacking correspondence between the MHC restriction of the inserted T cell epitope and the restriction of the antibody response could perhaps be due to a general disturbance of the intra-molecular competition of binding to MHC molecules by different self-protein segments. Using  
10 the herein described method non-tolerized self-protein segments may be presented to the T cells leading to breaking of the T cell as well as the B cell autotolerance towards the protein. In all the examples described below, a fragment of the self-protein was substituted with a  
15 foreign T cell epitope. This deletion followed by a substitution with an other protein fragment minimally obscure the tertiary structure of the self-proteins, but may also contribute strongly to the disturbance of said intra-molecular competition of the MHC class II binding self-  
20 segments. This concept is therefore clearly different from the above-mentioned mechanisms and methods. Independently of the operating mechanism of action by the herein described method, it is more technically advantageous compared to the known methods for breaking the B cell auto-  
25 tolerance, since it is possible to induce antibodies in a broad population of MHC molecules by insertion of a minimal number of different foreign T cell epitopes.

The present invention thus concerns the surprising fact  
30 that injection of recombinant proteins, which have been appropriately modulated by the insertion of one or more foreign T cell epitopes, induces a profound autoantibody response against said proteins. Surprisingly the antibody response induced is not necessarily restricted to the  
35 inserted T cell epitope. By inducing minimal tertiary structural changes in the highly conserved self-protein



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ubiquitin, as well as in TNF $\alpha$ , foreign T cell epitopes having a length of 12-15 amino acids were inserted using genetic engineering methods. These recombinant proteins were purified, emulsified in adjuvant and injected into mice. Within only one week an autoantibody response against ubiquitin could be detected in serum from these mice. Non-modified, recombinant ubiquitin treated and injected in the same way was not able to induce a response.

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By using this principle for developing vaccines against undesirable proteins, the risk of inducing allergic side-effect is reduced, and toxic self-proteins such as TNF $\alpha$  can simultaneously be detoxified by removing or mutating biologically active protein segments. The epitope-shielding effect described above is not a problem, and autoantibodies against ubiquitin were induced much faster as compared to the known technique, in which the self-protein is conjugated to a carrier protein or peptide. Importantly, by this method it furthermore seems possible to temporarily break the autotolerance of the T cells as well as that of the B cells of the individual, and such recombinant proteins will be self-immunogenic in a large population expressing many different MHC class II molecules.

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The vaccine of the invention consists of one or more self-proteins modulated as described above and formulated with suitable adjuvants, such as calcium phosphate, saponin, quil A or biodegradable polymers. The modulated self-proteins may be prepared as fusion proteins with suitable, immunologically active cytokines, such as GM-CSF or interleukin 2.

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The autovaccine may i.a. be a vaccine against TNF $\alpha$  or  $\gamma$ -interferon for the treatment of patients with cachexia, e.g. cancer patients, or a vaccine against IgE for the

treatment of patients with allergy. Furthermore, it may be a vaccine against  $TNF\alpha$ ,  $TNF\beta$  or interleukin 1 for the treatment of patients with chronic inflammatory diseases.

5 The invention is illustrated in the following examples.

Example 1. Cloning of foreign T cell epitopes into a gene coding for ubiquitin.

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An overview of this procedure is shown in fig. 1 using the T cell epitope MP7 as example. The gene sequences representing MP7 (MP7.1-C and MP7.1-NC) were synthesized as two complementary oligonucleotides designed with appropriate restriction enzyme cloning sites. The amino acid sequence of MP7 is PELFEALQKLFKHAY. The oligonucleotides were synthesized using conventional, automatic solid phase oligonucleotide synthesis and purified using agarose gel electrophoresis and low melting agarose. The desired bands were cut out from the gels, and known quantities of oligonucleotides were mixed, heated to 5°C below their theoretical melting point (usually to approximately 65°C) for 1-2 hours, and slowly cooled to 37°C. At this temperature the hybridized oligonucleotides were ligated to the vector fragments containing part of the ubiquitin gene. The subsequent analysis of positive clones using restriction fragment analysis and DNA sequencing was done by conventional methods ("Molecular Cloning", Eds.: T. Maniatis et al. 2 ed. CSH Laboratory Press, 1989).

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Example 2. Induction of autoantibodies against ubiquitin by vaccination with modified ubiquitin molecules.

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Genes containing the foreign T cell epitopes were expressed in E. coli strain, AR58 under control by the

heat sensitive  $\lambda$  repressor regulated promotor. Expression of the recombinant ubiquitin proteins were verified using a polyclonal anti-ubiquitin antibody and Western-blotting ("Antibodies", Eds.: D. Harlow et al., CSH Laboratory Press, 1988). The recombinant proteins were purified using conventional methods (Maniatis et al., supra).

Mice were injected i.p. with 100  $\mu$ g of ubiquitin or its analogs in PBS emulsified in Freund's Complete adjuvant. Booster injections of the same amount of antigen emulsified 1:1 in Freund's Incomplete adjuvant were performed i.p. at days 14 and 28. Five Balb/c mice in each group were examined and blood samples were examined for the presence of anti-ubiquitin antibodies on day 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, and 42 using conventional ELISA methodology.

The results exemplified by the antibody response against two different ubiquitin molecules containing the T cell epitopes OVA(325-336) and HEL(50-61), respectively, are shown in fig. 2. The amino acid sequence of the inserted OVA(325-336) epitope is: QAVHAAHAEINE and the amino acid sequence of the HEL(50-61) epitope is STDYGILQINSR.

A clear antibody response against native ubiquitin could be detected within only one week from the first injection of antigen reaching a maximum within 2 weeks. Anti-ubiquitin antibodies produced in rabbits by covalently conjugating ubiquitin to bovine immunoglobulin reached maximum values after a much longer immunization period (data not shown).

The antibody response against self-proteins can be increased even more by injecting self-proteins containing foreign T cell epitopes, as described in example 1, as fusion proteins with immunologically active cytokines such as e.g. granulocyte and monocyte colony stimulating factor

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(GM-CSF) or interleukin 2.

Example 3. Induction of autoantibodies against tumor  
necrosis factors (TNF) by vaccination with appropriately  
5 modified TNF molecules.

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The gene coding for the structural part of the murine TNF $\alpha$   
protein (MR101) was obtained by Polymerase Chain Reaction  
10 (PCR) cloning of the DNA. In the MR103 TNF $\alpha$  mutant the  
ovalbumin (OVA) H-2<sup>d</sup> restricted T cell epitope sequence  
325-334 (QAVHAAHAET) replaces the amino acids 26-35 in the  
cloned TNF $\alpha$  sequence, a substitution of an amphiphatic  $\alpha$ -  
helix. Substitutions in this region of the TNF $\alpha$  detoxifies  
15 the recombinant protein (X. Van Ostade et al., Nature 361,  
266-269, 1993). In the MR105 TNF $\alpha$  mutant the H-2<sup>k</sup> re-  
stricted T cell epitope from hen eggwhite lysozyme (HEL),  
amino acid sequence 81-96 (SALLSSDITASVNCAK) replaces the  
amino acids 5-20 in the cloned TNF $\alpha$  sequence. In the MR106  
20 TNF $\alpha$  mutant the same epitope, amino acid sequence 81-95  
(SALLSSDITASVNCA) replaces the amino acids 126-140 in the  
cloned TNF $\alpha$  sequence. The genetic constructions are  
described in Fig. 3. Different techniques compared to the  
technique described in example 1 were used for exchanging  
25 parts of the TNF $\alpha$  gene with DNA coding for T cell epi-  
topes. The MR105 and 106 constructs were made by intro-  
ducing the mutant sequence by PCR recloning a part of the  
TNF $\alpha$  gene flanking the intended site for introducing the T  
cell epitope. The mutant oligonucleotide primer contained  
30 both a DNA sequence homologous to the TNF $\alpha$  DNA sequence  
as well as a DNA sequence encoding the T cell epitope. The  
PCR recloned part of the TNF $\alpha$  gene was subsequently cut  
with appropriate restriction enzymes and cloned into the  
"wild type" MR101 gene. the MR103 construction was made by  
35 a modification of the "splicing by overlap extension" PCR  
technique (R. M. Horton et al., Gene 77, 61, 1989). Here

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two PCR products are produced, each covering a part of the TNF $\alpha$  gene, and additionally each PCR product contains half of the T cell epitope sequence. The complete mutant TNF $\alpha$  gene was subsequently made by combining the two PCR products in a second PCR. Finally, the complete genetic constructions were inserted into protein expression vectors. Subsequently, all genetic constructions were analyzed by restriction fragment analysis and DNA sequencing using conventional methods ("Molecular Cloning", Eds.: T. Maniatis et al. 2.ed. CSH Laboratory Press, 1989). The recombinant proteins were expressed in E.coli and purified by conventional protein purification methods.

Groups of BALB/c (MHC haplotype, H-2<sup>d</sup>) and C3H (MHC haplotype, H-2<sup>k</sup>) mice, respectively, were immunized subcutaneously with 100  $\mu$ g of semi-purified MR103 and MR106 emulsified in Freund's complete adjuvant. Every second week the immunizations were repeated using incomplete Freund's adjuvant. All mice developed an early and strong antibody response against biologically active MR101. This was measured by a direct ELISA method using passively adsorbed 100% pure MR101 (Fig. 4). Control mice immunized with MR101 and PBS, respectively, showed no antibody reactivity towards MR101.

Strikingly, the response was not MHC restricted corresponding to the implanted T cell epitopes, since both mice strains responded well to MR103 and MR106 (Fig. 4). Taken together these results illustrate (a) the ability of the method of the invention to induce autoantibodies towards a secreted autoprotein and (b) the improved efficiency of the herein described method with regard to inducing a response in a broader MHC population than predicted by the MHC binding ability of the inserted T cell epitopes. The immune response against the recombinant proteins MR103 and MR106 was much stronger and more high-titered compared to

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aldehyde conjugated MR101 (see Example 4).

Example 4. Induction of autoantibodies against TNF $\alpha$  by the method of the invention compared to conjugation to E. coli proteins.

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Semi-purified recombinant murine TNF $\alpha$  (MR101) was conjugated to E. coli proteins in PBS, pH 7.4, using 0.5% formaldehyde. Conjugation of the proteins was confirmed by SDS-PAGE. These conjugates were subsequently used for immunization of C3H mice. Another group of C3H mice was vaccinated only with semi-purified non-conjugated MR105, and about 100  $\mu$ g of recombinant TNF $\alpha$  were emulsified 1:1 in Freund's complete adjuvant and injected subcutaneously in each mouse. MR105 is biologically inactive as judged by the L929 bioassay for TNF $\alpha$ . In subsequent immunizations every second week incomplete Freund's adjuvant was used. Both groups eventually developed autoantibodies against highly purified biologically active MR101 as determined by ELISA, but the immune response against non-conjugated MR105 was induced earlier and was of a higher titer (Fig. 5).

Example 5. The possible MHC class II binding of peptides representing overlapping sequences of self-protein as well as of the ovalbumin T cell epitope inserted in ubiquitin.

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Peptide-MHC complexes were obtained by incubating  $^{125}$ I-labelled peptide (10-100 nM) with affinity purified MHC class II molecules (2-10  $\mu$ M) at room temperature for 3 days (S. Mouritsen, J. Immunol. 148, 1438-1444, 1992). The following peptides were used as radiolabelled markers of binding: Hb(64-76)Y which binds strongly to the E<sup>k</sup> molecule and HEL(46-61)Y which binds strongly to the A<sup>k</sup>

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molecule. These complexes were co-incubated with large amounts of cold peptide (> 550  $\mu$ m) which is sufficient to inhibit totally all immunologically relevant MHC class II binding. Either the same peptides were used, or three different overlapping peptides were used, said peptides representing the flanking regions as well as the entire OVA(325-336) T cell epitope which was substituted into ubiquitin (see Example 2). The three peptides were: TITLEVEPSQAVHAA (U(12-26)), PSQAVHAAHAEINEKE (U(19-34)) and HAEINEKEGIPPDQQ (U(27-41)). The reaction buffer contained 8 mM citrate, 17 mM phosphate, and 0.05% NP-40 (pH 5) and peptide-MHC class II complexes were separated (in duplicate) from free peptide by gel filtration using G25 spun columns. Both the radioactivities of the excluded "void" volume and of the included volume were measured by gamma spectrometry. The competitive inhibition of maximal binding (in percent) by addition of cold peptide was calculated. The results are shown in Table I.

Table I.

Peptid/ MHC	Hb(64-76)	HEL(46-61)	U(12-26)	U(19-34)	U(27-41)
A <sup>k</sup>	28.6	<u>97.4</u>	35.3	44.6	7.8
E <sup>k</sup>	<u>92.6</u>	0.0	45.6	12.2	0.0

30

It can be seen that total inhibition of the binding of the radiolabelled peptides Hb(64-76)Y and HEL(46-61)Y to E<sup>k</sup> and A<sup>k</sup> respectively could only be achieved using cold versions of the same peptides. Although some inhibition of binding was seen by U(12-26) and U(19-434) using these extreme amounts of cold peptide, it is likely that the

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affinity of these peptides to the H-2<sup>k</sup> MHC class molecules is very low. Therefore this seems not to be sufficient to explain the strong immunogenicity in the H-2<sup>k</sup> mouse strain of the ubiquitin analog containing the ovalbumin T cell epitope. More likely, other and previously non-tolerized self-epitopes are presented to the T cell in these animals.

Example 6. Treatment of diabetes of inflammatory disease by vaccination with appropriately modified TNF $\alpha$  molecules.

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Genes coding for TNF $\alpha$  are modified by insertion of appropriate gene segments coding for T cell epitopes derived from e.g. tetanus toxin or influenza hemagglutinin. Such genes are expressed in appropriate expression vectors in e.g. E. coli or insect cells. The recombinant TNF $\alpha$  proteins were purified using conventional methods ("Molecular Cloning", Eds.: T. Maniatis et al. 2. ed. CSH Laboratory Press, 1989).

Optionally such recombinant proteins can be coupled to immunologically active cytokines such as GM-CSF or interleukin 2.

The recombinant proteins can be formulated with appropriate adjuvants and administered as an anti-TNF $\alpha$  vaccine to patients suffering from diseases where TNF $\alpha$  is important for the pathogenesis. The induced anti-TNF $\alpha$  antibodies will thereby affect the diseases.

One example of said diseases is the chronic inflammatory diseases such as e.g. rheumatoid arthritis where TNF $\alpha$  is believed to play an important role (reviewed in: F.M. Brennan et al., Br. J. Rheumatol. 31, 293-298, 1992). TNF $\alpha$  is also believed to play an important role in the cachec-



tic conditions seen in cancer and in chronic infectious diseases such as AIDS (reviewed in M. Odeh. J. Intern. Med. 228, 549-556, 1990). It is also known that TNF participates in septic shock (reviewed in: B.P. Giroir, Crit. Care. Med., 21, 780-789, 1993). Furthermore, it has been shown that TNF $\alpha$  may play a pathogenetic role in the development of type II diabetes mellitus (CH Lang et al., Endocrinology 130, 43-52, 1992).

10    Legends to figures

Fig. 1. Schematic overview of the cloning strategy used in the construction of a ubiquitin gene with an implanted foreign T cell epitope (MP7). Restriction enzyme digestions, hybridization and ligation procedures are indicated with arrows. Fragment sizes are shown in parentheses.

Fig. 2. Reactivity toward immobilized bovine ubiquitin in sera from mice immunized with recombinant ubiquitin and analogs containing the implanted T cell epitopes OVA(323-339) and HEL (50-61), respectively. Fig. 2a) sera from Balb/c mice immunized with recombinant ubiquitin containing OVA(325-336). Fig. 2b) sera from Balb/c mice immunized with recombinant ubiquitin containing the T cell epitope HEL(50-61). Fig. 2c) sera from Balb/c mice immunized with recombinant non-modified ubiquitin. Sera (diluted 1:100) were tested in a standard ELISA assay using non-modified bovine ubiquitin immobilized on the solid phase.

Fig. 3. Schematic overview of the cloning strategy used in the construction of the recombinant TNF $\alpha$  mutants. PCR products and restriction enzyme digestions are indicated.

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Fig. 4. Induction of TNF $\alpha$  autoantibodies by vaccination of Balb/c or C3H mice with semipurified MR103 and MR106. The antibody titers were measured by ELISA and expressed as arbitrary units (AU) referring to a strong standard anti-serum from one mouse. The plotted values represent a mean titer for 5 animals. Freund's complete adjuvant was used as adjuvant for the first immunization. All subsequent immunizations at 14 days intervals were done with Freund's incomplete adjuvant. Mice immunized in parallel with native MR101 in PBS did not develop detectable TNF $\alpha$  auto-antibodies (data not shown). Non-detectable antibody titers were assigned the titer value 1.

Fig. 5. Anti TNF $\alpha$  autoantibodies induced by vaccination with non-conjugated MR105 and MR101 conjugated to E. coli proteins, respectively. C3H mice and Balb/c mice were immunized with both preparations. The immunizations, measurements and calculations of mean antibody titers were done as described in example 4.

## C l a i m s :

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1. A method for the modulation of self-proteins by  
5 inducing antibody responses against such proteins,  
c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that one or more foreign T  
cell epitopes are inserted in such proteins by molecular  
biological means, thereby rendering said proteins  
immunogenic.
- 10 2. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r -  
i z e d in that immunodominant T cell epitopes from  
tetanus toxoid or diphtheria toxoid are inserted in said  
proteins.
- 15 3. An autovaccine against undesirable proteins in humans  
or animals, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that it consists  
of one or more self-proteins modulated according to claim  
1 or 2 and formulated with pharmaceutically acceptable  
20 adjuvants, such as calcium phosphate, saponin, quil A and  
biodegradable polymers.
- 25 4. An autovaccine according to claim 3, c h a r a c -  
t e r i z e d in that the modulated self-proteins are  
prepared as fusion proteins with suitable, immunologically  
active cytokines, such as GM-CSF or interleukin 2.
- 30 5. An autovaccine according to claim 3, c h a r a c -  
t e r i z e d in that it is a vaccine against TNF $\alpha$  or  $\gamma$ -  
interferon for the treatment of patients with cachexia,  
e.g. cancer patients.
- 35 6. An autovaccine according to claim 3, c h a r a c -  
t e r i z e d in that it is a vaccine against IgE for the  
treatment of patients with allergy.

7. An autovaccine according to claim 3, c h a r a c -  
t e r i z e d in that it is a vaccine against TNF $\alpha$ , TNF $\delta$   
or interleukin 1 for the treatment of patients with  
chronic inflammatory diseases.

5

8. An autovaccine according to claim 7, c h a r a c -  
t e r i z e d in that it is a vaccine for treatment of  
patients with rheumatoid arthritis or inflammatory bowel  
disease.

10

9. An autovaccine according to claim 3 or 4, c h a -  
r a c t e r i z e d in that it is a vaccine against TNF $\alpha$   
for the treatment of diabetes mellitus.

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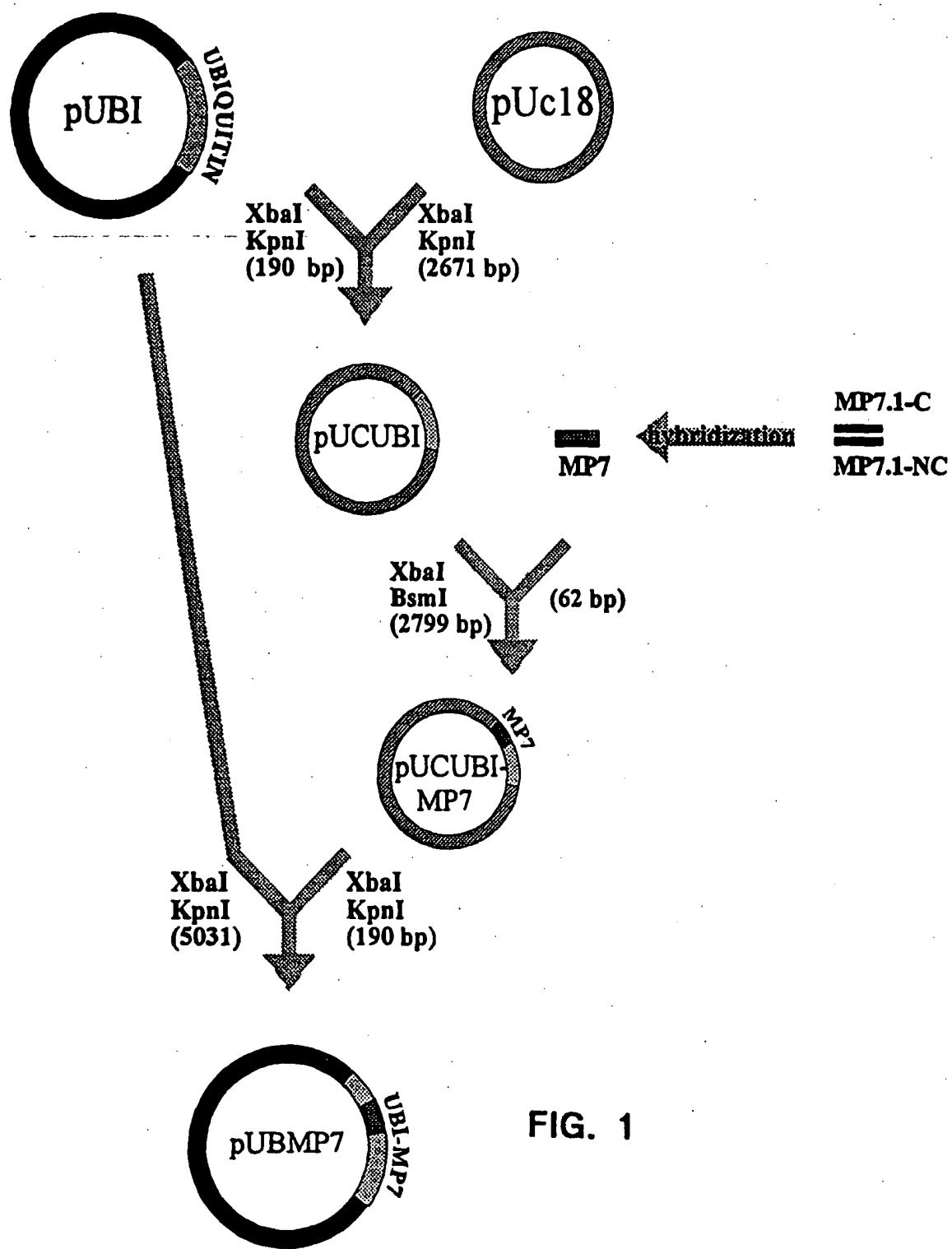


FIG. 1

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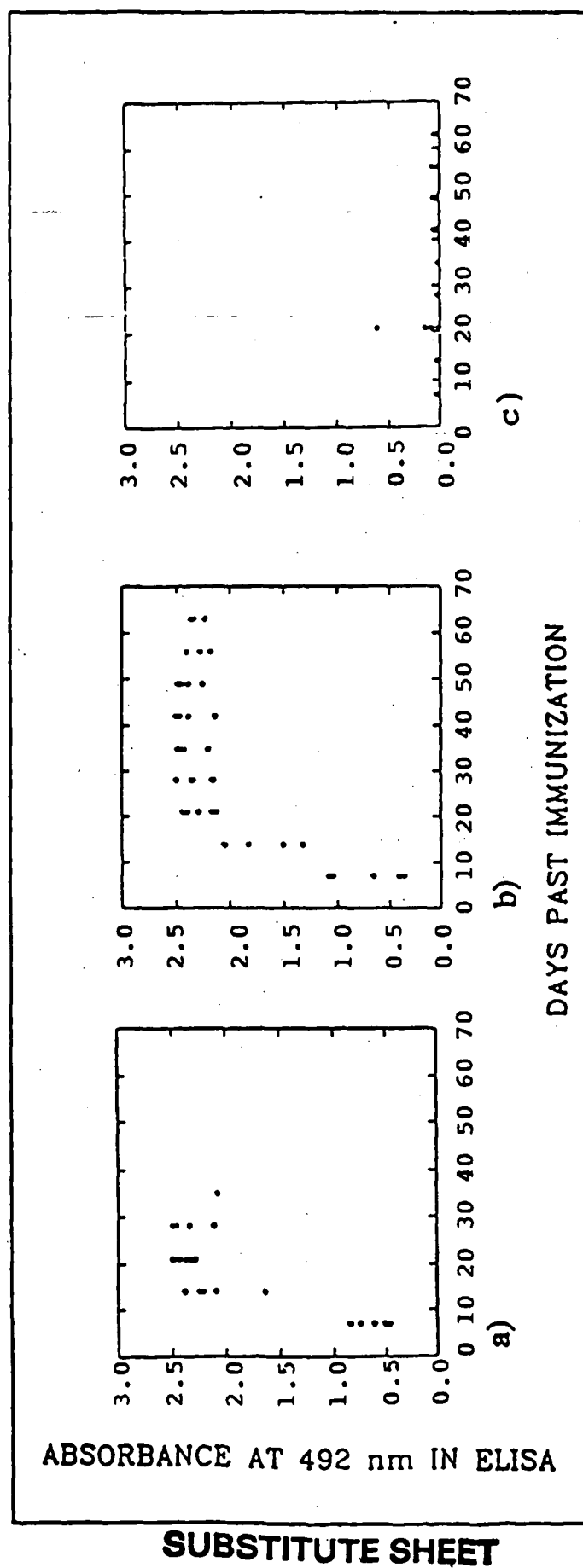
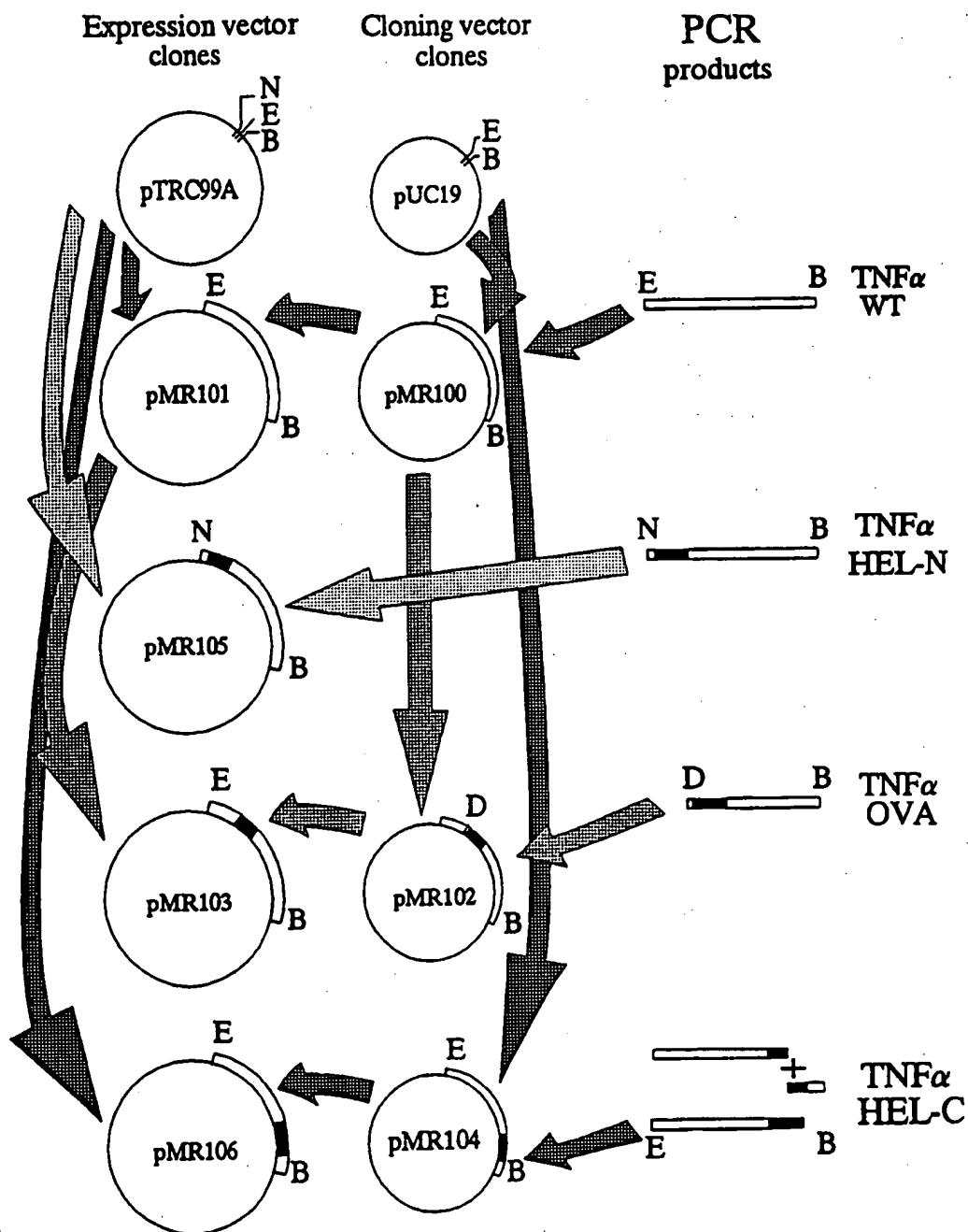


FIG. 2

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# Cloning strategy for murine TNF $\alpha$ mutants.

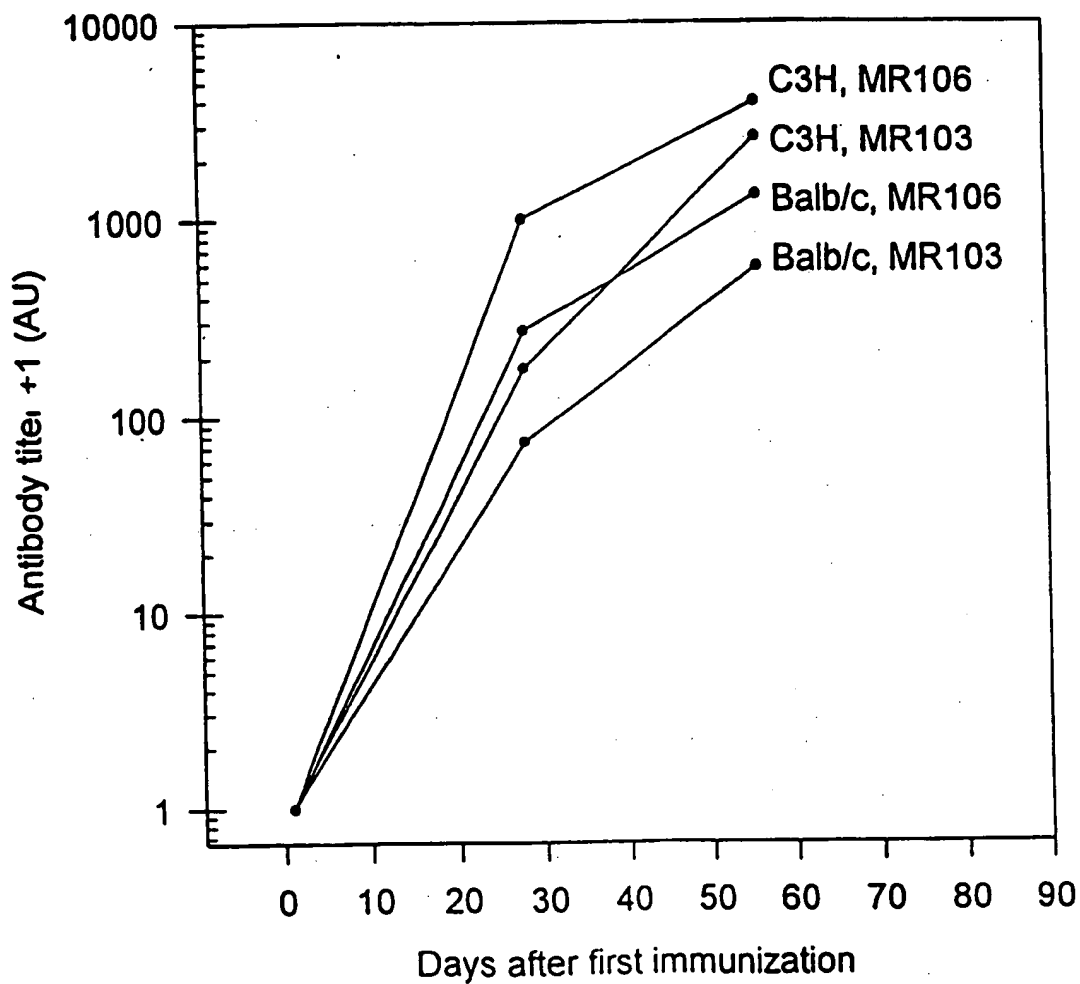


Restriction enzyme symbols: E: EcoRI, B: BamHI, N: NcoI, D: DraIII.

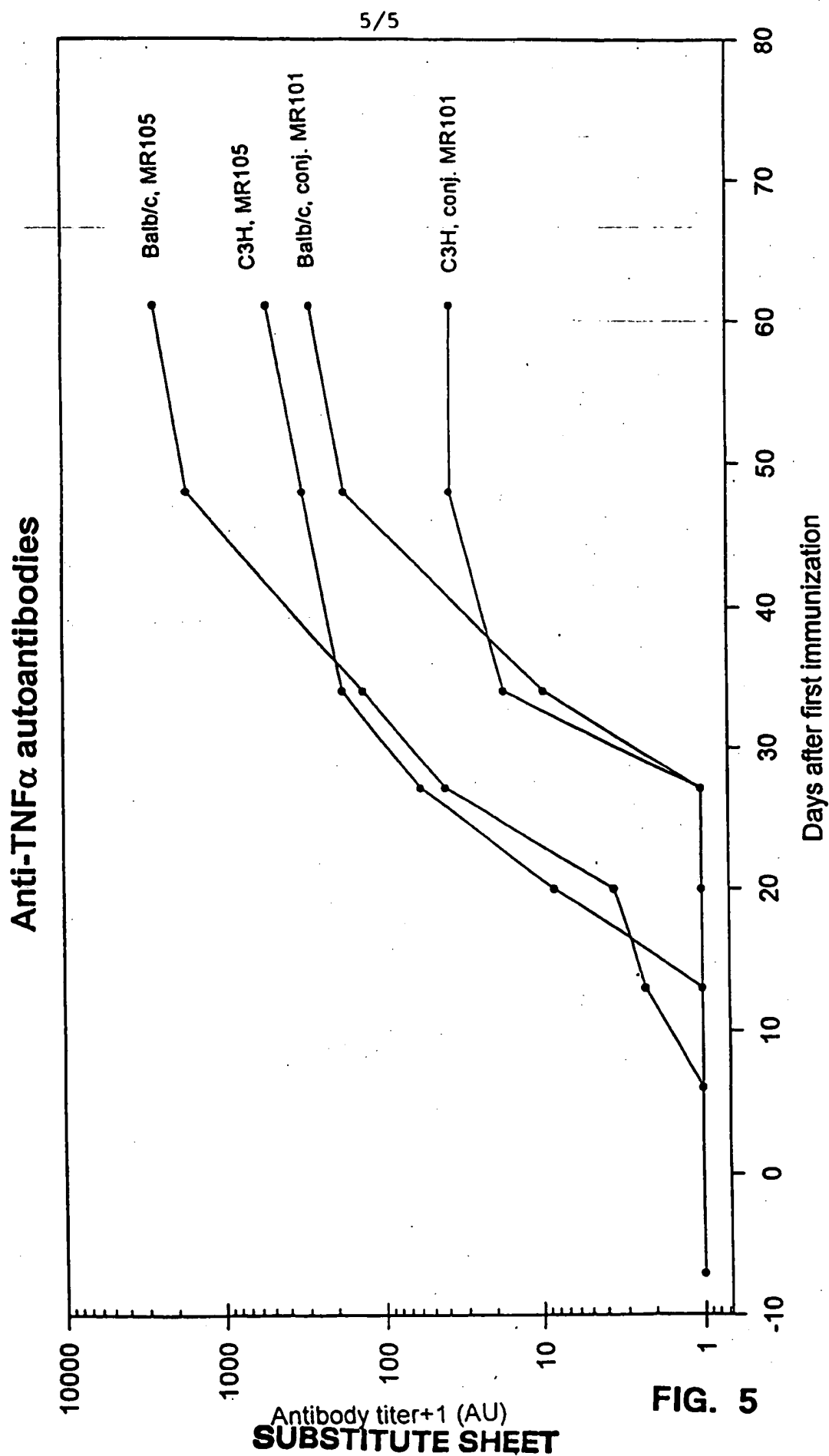
FIG. 3

SUBSTITUTE SHEET

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**Anti TNF $\alpha$  auto-antibodies****FIG. 4**





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